2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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Stadium, where most village football matches are played, are in themselves evidence that fights during these occasions are the rule rather than the exception.

Although there is little formal contact between villages, there is a considerable amount of informal coming and going between their inhabitants. Most inter-village marriages are between partners from neighbouring villages, and the network of kin ties that these form helps to bind the villages of a district together. Inhabitants of neighbouring villages travel to and from work on the same buses, and see each other often at the annual feasts of the district. These multiple relations contribute to a certain district spirit. The most striking example is the unity of the Gozitans, although people from the south of Malta have something of the same spirit of belonging to a particular district. Nonetheless, the knowledge the inhabitants of the southern Maltese villages have of each other cannot be compared to that of the Gozitans, who, for the most part, not only recognize each other by face, name and nickname, but usually know a surprising (and often uncomfortable) amount of personal details about one another.

IV

A person becomes a member of a village by being born there, or marrying or moving into it. The administrative details connected with these acts are quite simple. Parents must register the birth of a child at the local police station, and the parish priest enters the child's name in his register when the baby is baptized, which usually takes place within a few days of its birth. If a man marries into a village, his name will be entered in the parish register, for under Church law the marriage must be performed by the parish priest of the bride, or his delegate. If the couple settles in the husband's village or in a strange village, their names will be recorded on the annual census there, the *status animarum*, which every parish priest prepares for his bishop. All changes of address are supposed to be given (but often are not) to the Rationing Office and, if the person is over twenty-one, to the Electoral Office. No other civil authorities are interested in a person's whereabouts.

In point of fact, however, most people live in the villages into which they were born. This is another respect in which the towns

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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differ from the villages. While only about sixteen per cent of the adult population of an average Maltese village is not native born, approximately two-thirds of the adults residing in the urban and suburban areas were born outside the communities in which they now live (see Table 2 below).

There is no rule of village endogamy or exogamy, and a bride and groom are free to choose where they wish to live and set up their household. The choice of residence is normally governed by available housing, place of work and the relative strength of the bride's and groom's ties with their respective families and villages. But in case of a conflict of interest, a wife is expected to follow the wishes of her husband. If housing is available in both the village of the wife and that of her husband, and the husband's place of work is in neither, there is a tendency for the couple to live in the wife's village. The Maltese themselves acknowledge that, all other things being equal, the ties between a wife and her family are stronger than those between her husband and his kin.

Thus in Farrug and Kortin, I found that approximately half the couples had married and settled within their respective villages. Less than one in twenty (4 per cent) of the couples were strangers who had moved there because of the shortage of housing in their own villages; and all of these had relatives already living in the two villages. The outsiders who married or moved into Farrug and Kortin formed one-fifth (21 per cent) of the adult population, or about 10 per cent of the total population of each. In slightly over half (56 per cent) the marriages between people from these two villages and other villages, the husband settled in his wife's village. This is the general trend in Malta, where most men work outside their villages. In Gozo, where farming is the chief occupation, it is more usual for a woman to move to her husband's village, for that is his place of work. People from the towns who marry villagers are reluctant to move into the villages, and it is therefore fairly common to find villagers, especially women, moving to join their spouses in the towns.

The general principles regarding marriage residence are reflected in Table 2.

The number of outsiders resident in a village is an important factor governing the degree to which its inhabitants consider themselves a corporate group. As outsiders always retain strong links with their place of birth, the solidarity of a village is inversely

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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proportional to the number of outsiders resident in it. Not only does loyalty to friends and relations in a man's village of birth often take precedence over new ties established by his marriage into a strange village, but it is not unusual for a man married into another village to continue to play an active part in the social life of his native village. Conversely, an outsider is seldom called upon or attempts to join the clubs and associations of his wife's village. Thus, only 3 per cent of the committee members of the fifteen band and social clubs in the sample villages I studied were outsiders, although about 18 per cent of the adult male population resident in these villages were born elsewhere. On the other hand, 5 per cent of the committee members were now living outside the villages in which they were born and hold office.

TABLE 2. Adults Born Outside their Place of Residence[1]

Place of Residence	*Percentage born elsewhere*	*Males*	*Females*
Urban/Suburban	66%	45%	55%
Maltese Villages	16	52	48
Gozitan Villages	15	39	61

Because of the many ties which bind people to their villages of birth, an adult who moves into his wife's village remains an outsider for many years. The village will probably not give him a distinctive village nickname, and he will be known simply as the husband of his wife, or perhaps by the name of his native village. Although the village may ignore his outside origin for much of the time, his place of birth is certain to be remembered and held against him by his enemies, should be become involved in a dispute. The children of an outsider, however, become full members of the village by virtue of their birth there, and their connection with the community through the family of their mother (or father). By the time his children begin to grow up and get married, the outsider is usually firmly established as a full member of the community.

[1] This table was compiled from data made available to me by the Principal Government Electoral Officer. It covers a random sample drawn from a sample of two suburban communities (Sliema and Balzan), seven Maltese villages (Zebbuġ, Gharghur, Gudja, Mosta, Qrendi, Dingli and Żurrieq) and three Gozitan villages (Qala, Xagħra and Għarb).

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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156 be successful in the field of village politics. From there he can
554 move into national politics.

156 Traditionally, age was an important determinant of status. Age
178 meant wisdom, experience and position at the head of a large
554 family. The deference accorded to age is preserved in the proverb
561 'Heed well the words of the elders' (*Kliem ix-xih żomm fih*). But
[539] in a society where teenage sons work as skilled labourers, clerks and teachers while their fathers still farm or dig ditches, and where schoolboys read letters, newspapers and voting instructions to their illiterate parents, the words of the elders are often not heard. The social and cultural gap between the old and the young is wider now than it has been for many generations. Today leadership in the villages is in relatively young hands. Old parish registers support the memories of the present generation of elders that this has not always been the case.

156 Village sons who are professionals often become presidents of
463 their local band clubs. Very often they no longer live in their
554 native villages. Most marry town-bred girls from professional
591 families who do not wish to leave their urban surroundings and
[575] friends to live amongst people they regard as their inferiors in
[693] every sense. Though village-born professionals find it convenient for business purposes to live in the town, most lawyers continue to practise in their native villages. But when they continue to reside in their villages, even though their social life and many of their business interests are oriented away from the community, they normally enjoy great prestige. This works to enlarge their professional clientele. These assets can easily be converted into political support, and many village doctors and lawyers have gone successfully into politics.

156 Dr. Farrugia of Kortin, the town's only lawyer and its leading
159 citizen, is a case in point. A native of Kortin, he is the son of old
693 Manwel, the retired teacher who runs the Good Friday procession. Of a relatively modest background, he married the daughter of the former lawyer in the village, and took over the latter's
[575] large practice when he died. Past president of both the football and social clubs, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, he has been president of the band club for many years. He is also a successful politician at the national level.

554. Frequently the government District Medical Officers are the
759 only professionals resident in the villages in which they work.

6: Beeley K-5 (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

565 The landed classes in Malta and particularly the nobility have never taken any considerable part in the communal life of the villages in which they maintain their country seats and draw rents from the lands which they own. They have always been more urban than rural and more European than Maltese. [793] A squirearchy on the English pattern has been lacking, and the functions which, in the English village, fell to the squire have, in Malta, come within the wide range of activities of the Parish Priest.

621 795 565 Apart from the clergy[10] and the gentry, the greater part of the population of the traditional village in Malta was made up of the peasantry deriving their livelihood directly or indirectly from the land or in some cases the sea. Within this section of the community homogeneity was the keynote. There was one Church. All the populace were Church members and attended the same services at the same times each day of every [203] week. The Church could therefore be the centre of diffusion of news to the villagers - both relating to farming and to general affairs in and out of the village.

621 565 241 423 [611] [591] Within the village the peasant and his family, patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal, worked the few tmien of land held on rent or lease: rarely was much of it owned by the cultivator. The work of the farm and of the household went on as a single unit (Section 2). The two were often located within the same cluster of buildings (Case VI, v. Plan). Clearly some farmers were richer than others, some had more land, some more animals, but accepted stratification within the village went no further than this: there was no middle class between priest and farmer.

628 197 For the peasant, the bounds of his regular experience were the limits of the village. Contact between villages, even where close together, was slight and invariably less than that between the individual village and Valletta. Evidence of this is found in the dialect differences between villages but equally illuminating is the fact that the basic dialect distinction that can be made is that between the Urban area, with its Italianized vocabulary and intonation, and the rural parts of the Islands with their characteristically broader vowels, harsher gutturals and fewer European words and idioms (B/Aquilina, J). Language is but one aspect of rural culture in the Maltese Islands which reveals the essential independence of the village within the traditional rural scene. Village patriotism is expressed in inter-Parish rivalry and in a variety of regional reputations, proverbs, and local lore. Thus the shrewdness of the inhabitants of Rabat is revealed by the saying that "A man from Rabat is worth two Jews"[12]. The men of Żebbuġ (Malta) are acknowledged to be merchants par excellence however, while those of Qormi

628 186 [794]

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

585 ered flowers upon them, also nuts and grains of wheat, and on their entering the house one of the kinsfolk threw from one of the windows or balcony a few handfuls of barley and some small coins on their heads.

The nuptial feast took place immediately afterwards; but the bride ate in a separate apartment. The repast being ended she was seated next to her husband and drank out of the same cup.

[184] [535] [465] [431] At a village wedding the company danced during the feast; each dancer throwing a piece of money to the fiddlers and each guest contributing a fowl to the repast.

[591] The bride always passed a week in her father's house, after which she was received with much pomp by her husband whose relations gave a great feast which was called il *hargia*.

8:Brockman T-5 (no date) 1938
EZ6 Malta EZ6

The officiating priest was then presented with a basin containing a cake, a handkerchief, and two bottles of wine—the usual fee on such occasions. When the marriage ceremony was completed, everyone returned from church in the same order as before.

As the newly married couple wended their way to their house, the women and girls who crowded the balconies showered flowers upon them also nuts and grains and wheat, and on their entering the house one of the kinsfolk threw from one of the windows or balcony a few handfuls of barley and some small coins on their heads.

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The bridegroom's symbolic present of a fish is very likely connected with fecundity, for the fish was regarded as an emblem of fecundity by the Assyrians and the Phoenicians. It is not, however, in this connection alone that the fish is a potent symbol. Prudence (apparently a virtue highly prized in a Maltese wife—Salt, another symbol of prudence, is included in the ingredients with which the bride's lips are anointed), and Wisdom were anciently supposed to be the properties of numerous Sacred Fish. Finn M'Cull, in the Irish legend, "Happens upon the Salmon of Knowledge . . ."

[1] BUSUTTIL, op. cit.